

VZCZCXRO4197  
PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHBK #0624/01 0320004  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 010004Z FEB 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4451  
INFO RUEHNS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5150  
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 000624

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#) [TH](#)  
SUBJECT: HOW THE THAI FORMULATE POLICY TOWARD BURMA

Classified By: Political Officer J.R. Littlejohn, reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) The Thai MFA has a lead role in drafting policy toward Burma and normally clears its drafts through an interagency body that includes the National Security Council (NSC) and the Army. When the RTG formulated its position on the UNSC resolution on Burma, however, the MFA had full control of the process and did not seek outside clearances. The key MFA official responsible for Burma explained to us the details of Thai policy formulation. Despite a change of administrations, it appears the MFA retains a leading role in charting the course of Thai policy toward Burma. End Summary.

GENERAL POLICY TOWARD BURMA

2. (C) In a January 30 conversation, MFA East Asian Affairs Division I Acting Director, Kallayana Vipattipumiprakes described to us how the MFA formulates Thailand's general approach toward Burma. The East Asia Department's Division I (responsible for Burma, Philippines, Singapore, and Brunei) formulates a policy, and then passes it up to the Permanent Secretary for review. After the PermSec clears, the document

SIPDIS

is sent to the Foreign Minister for use in cabinet level interagency discussion. Principal participants in all interagency discussions on Burma include the National Security Council (NSC) and the Army. Other groups in the business sector may be encouraged to weigh in. For example, if an issue pertains to the security of the Thai-Burma border, discussion with the private sector would be warranted. Kallayana said this group might include members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Thai Bankers Association and the Federation of Thai Industry.

3. (C) Kallayana told us that Thai policy toward Burma post-coup will remain essentially the same as pre-coup. He said the Thai would continue to honor past commitments with Burma, but full transparency would be a prerequisite for future deals.

THAILAND'S POSITION ON THE UNSC RESOLUTION ON BURMA

4. (C) Kallayana said that the Foreign Ministry developed its stance on the UN Security Council resolution on Burma

internally. According to Kallayana, the RTG's position paper on the draft resolution on Burma was prepared in Division I, under his supervision. The document was vetted by Permanent Secretary Krit Garnjana-Goonchorn and forwarded to Foreign

#### SIPDIS

Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram. Kallayana said that the FM and Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont tend to "see eye-to-eye" on most foreign policy issues, including Burma. However, he said, they do not always agree on Malaysian issues, and when there is disagreement, the PM does not hesitate to assert his views on Malaysia, because he feels "he is quite knowledgeable in this area."

#### ASEAN

-----

15. (C) Kallayana said his office has a say in policy planning regarding the formulation of Thai views on ASEAN's position toward Burma, but the bulk of the work in this area is handled by the MFA Secretariat, which drafts position papers used by MFA officials for ASEAN meetings. Foreign policy issues are covered at meetings and final authority on formal Thai positions rests with the Foreign Minister, the NSC and the Army.

16. (C) When asked if international concerns relating to Burma are most appropriately dealt with in the context of ASEAN, Kallayana said that Thailand and more broadly ASEAN cannot go it alone. He said that Thailand and ASEAN need the United States and the European Union to continue applying pressure on Burma. He noted that the Thai are also talking to the Russians and the Chinese inside Burma. The Thai hope these two countries will encourage Burma to step up efforts toward democratization and reconciliation. Specifically, he said they would like the Russians to communicate that they cannot continuously exercise the veto in defense of a Burma that is non-responsive to the will of the international community.

BANGKOK 00000624 002 OF 002

Kallayana emphasized that Thailand still wants Burma to move toward democratization.

#### THE TRANSPARENCY STANDARD

-----

17. (C) When asked about the impact of the PM's use of transparency as a keystone of Thai foreign engagement, Kallayana said that it was no secret that ousted PM Thaksin was believed to have had significant business interests in Burma. He said this government does not have the same interests. According to Kallayana, Surayud himself came up with the idea of using "transparency" as a buzzword associated with good governance.

18. (C) Kallayana also said that PM Surayud would not plan to visit Burma again during his time in office. Kallayana noted that in the lead up to tabling the UNSC resolution, PM Surayud specifically told the generals in Burma that the Thais and the ASEAN community are looking to Burma to deliver "credible" results. Kallayana said that the Thai never heard back from the Burmese government on this request. (When asked to define a credible result, Kallayana said the Thai would like to see progress on the five issues UN Under Secretary General Gambari mentioned during his November trip to Burma: the release of political prisoners; humanitarian access; a more inclusive political process; the need to work with the ILO; and the need for a cessation of hostilities against ethnic minorities.)

#### COMMENT

-----

19. (C) Despite a change in Thai administrations, and a widespread belief that PM Surayud personally has little affinity for Burma, the Foreign Ministry appears to have

ceded little influence over formulation of Thai policy toward its neighbor. In fact, the wider involvement of the military and the private sector in policy formulation could mean that the PM's personal view will have less of an impact, given that Burmese affairs are not a top priority for him.

BOYCE